

Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets



(11) EP 1 415 959 A1

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION
published in accordance with Art. 158(3) EPC

(43) Date of publication:
06.05.2004 Bulletin 2004/19

(51) Int Cl.7: **C03B 33/023**, G02F 1/1333,
G02F 1/13, B28D 1/00

(21) Application number: **02745994.0**

(86) International application number:
PCT/JP2002/007086

(22) Date of filing: **12.07.2002**

(87) International publication number:
WO 2003/006391 (23.01.2003 Gazette 2003/04)

(84) Designated Contracting States:
**AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR
IE IT LI LU MC NL PT SE SK TR**

(72) Inventor: **WAKAYAMA, Haruo,**
MITSUBOSHI DIAMOND IND. Co., Ltd.
Suita-shi, Osaka 564-0044 (JP)

(30) Priority: **12.07.2001 JP 2001212169**

(74) Representative: **Müller-Boré & Partner**
Patentanwälte
Grafinger Strasse 2
81671 München (DE)

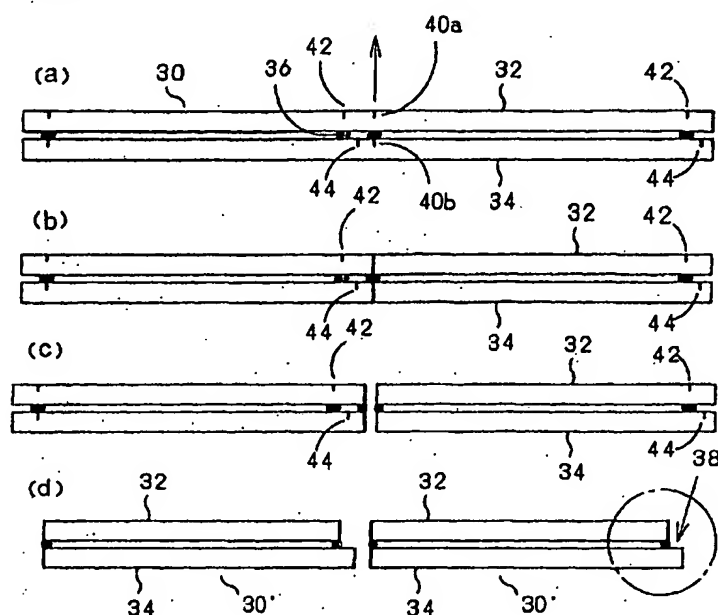
(71) Applicant: **Mitsuboshi Diamond Industrial Co.,
Ltd.**
Suita-city, Osaka Pref. 564-0044 (JP)

(54) **FLAT DISPLAY PANEL AND METHOD OF DIVIDING THE FLAT DISPLAY PANEL**

(57) In a flat display panel wherein two plates made of a brittle material are adhered to each other, at least one of the two plates has a plane on which a scribing line is formed, and the plane of the at least one of the plates on which a scribing line is formed is opposed to a plane of the other of the at least one of the two plates

on which no scribing line is formed. In a case, the two plates have planes on which scribing is performed, while in another case, only one of the two plates has a plane on which scribing is performed. In the latter case, scribing may be performed on the other of the two plates after the two plates are adhered.

Fig.3



EP 1 415 959 A1

Description

Technical Field

[0001] The present invention relates to a flat display panel such as a liquid crystal panel having two plates adhered to each other, and a method for separating it into parts.

Background Art

[0002] Flat display panels such as a liquid crystal display panel, a panel of a liquid crystal projector, an organic electroluminescence element and the like are used in various areas for communication between a machine and a man. Various electronic controller circuits necessary for display function are formed on inner surfaces of two plates made of a brittle material or brittle materials and opposing to each other. The two are adhered to each other in a fabrication process of such a flat display panel. The electronic controller circuits controls a functional material sealed in a space between the two plates, and the panel is used as a display apparatus to display a visible image.

[0003] A prior art fabrication process of a liquid crystal panel as one of flat display panels is explained here. It is to be noted that separation of plates made of a brittle material such as glass plates into a plurality of parts is referred to as "separating" or "breaking" in the art. Hereinafter, "separating" step is referred to a step after scribing until division into a plurality of panels.

[0004] As shown in Fig. 1, in the fabrication of a liquid crystal panel 10, that is a kind of a flat display panel, two glass plates 12, 14 are adhered to each other with a sealant 16. Usually scribing lines are formed on the two glass plates of the liquid crystal panel 10 of a large size (or mother panel), and a force is applied along the scribing lines. Thus, as the force is applied, vertical cracks extend further in thickness direction from the scribing lines consisting of vertical cracks to separate the mother panel (the liquid crystal panel 10) into a plurality of liquid crystal panels 10'. Further, a terminal 18 used as a terminal of a thin film transistor (TFT) array is formed on the glass plate 14. The sealant 16 is shown with an exaggerated size in the cross sections shown in the lower side in Fig. 1, in order to show the positions of the sealant 16 clearly.

[0005] Fig. 2 shows separating steps (a) to (d) of a liquid crystal panel 10. In order to separate it to liquid crystal panels 10', two separating steps and two inversion steps are necessary.

(a) By using the scribing apparatus, a scribing line 22a is formed with a glass cutter wheel 20 on one of the glass plates 12.

(b) The liquid crystal panel 10 is carried to a first breaking apparatus by turning the upside down. In the breaking apparatus, a breaking bar 26 is

pressed down onto the other of the glass plates 14 at the position of the scribing line 22a to break the lower glass plate 12 along the scribing line 22a.

(c) Next, the liquid crystal panel 10 having the low glass plate 12 broken already is carried to a second scribing apparatus. In the second scribing apparatus, a scribing line 22b is formed with a glass cutter wheel 20 on the other glass plate 14.

(d) Next, the liquid crystal panel 10 is carried to the second breaking apparatus by turning the upside down. In the second breaking apparatus, a breaking bar 26 is pressed down onto the other of the glass plates 12 at the position of the scribing line 22b to break the lower glass plate 14 along the scribing line 22b. Thus, the liquid crystal panel 10 is separated into two.

[0006] Previously, in a fabrication process for a liquid crystal panel 10, the scribing is performed for the two glass plates 12, 14 after adhered to each other. Then, as shown in step (c), the scribing is performed on the lower plane of the glass plate 12 and on the upper plane of the glass plate 14. Therefore, the direction of bending moment given to the liquid crystal panel in the separating step is different between the glass plate 12 and 14. Therefore, the two glass plates cannot be broken at the same time. Therefore, after scribing on the glass plate 12 at step (a), the liquid crystal panel 10 is inverted, and the scribing on the other glass plate 14 is performed. Therefore, two cutting steps and two inversion steps are necessary. Thus, the process of the separation with the apparatus becomes long, and the system structure is large. Further, in the breaking step (d) for the glass plate 14, if the force becomes too large to generate defects in the cross section generated by separating the glass plates 12 and 14 into parts, this decreases the value of the products.

Disclosure of Invention

[0007] An object of the invention is to provide a simpler separation method of a flat display panel with two plates made of a brittle material or brittle materials adhered to each other and flat display panels produced by the method.

[0008] A flat display panel according to the invention includes two plates made of a brittle material or brittle materials adhered to each other. At least one of the two plates has a plane on which a scribing line is formed, and the plane of the at least one of the plates on which a scribing line is formed is opposed to a plane of the other of the at least one of the two plates on which no scribing line is formed. In a case, the two plates have planes on which scribing is performed, while in another case, only one of the two plates has a plane on which scribing is performed. In the latter case, scribing may be performed on the other of the two plates after the two plates are adhered.

[0009] In a separation method according to the invention, at least one of two plates made of a brittle material or brittle materials is scribed. Next, the two plates are adhered to each other so that the plane of the at least one of the two plates on which scribing is performed opposes a plane of the other of the at least one of the two plates on which no scribing is performed. Further, the other of the at least one of the two plates is scribed if scribing is not yet performed thereon. The adhered two plates are bent like an inverted-V-character if the planes on which scribing is performed are positioned at the upper side, or like a V-character if the planes on which scribing is performed are positioned at the lower side. Thus, the two plates are separated at the same time.

[0010] An advantage of the invention is that the fabrication process can be simplified without decreasing the value of products.

Brief Description of Drawings

[0011]

Fig. 1 is a diagram for explaining a structure of a prior art liquid crystal panel;

Fig. 2 is a diagram for explaining separating processes of the prior art liquid crystal panel;

Fig. 3 is a diagram for explaining separating processes of a liquid crystal panel according to the invention;

Fig. 4 is an enlarged view of a terminal portion in a liquid crystal panel;

Fig. 5 is an enlarged view of the terminal portion in the liquid crystal panel;

Fig. 6 is a flowchart of fabrication of a liquid crystal panel according to the invention;

Fig. 7 is a perspective view of an example of a breaking apparatus suitable for breaking the liquid crystal panel;

Fig. 8 is a perspective view of another example of a breaking apparatus suitable for cutting the liquid crystal panel;

Fig. 9 is a perspective view of a further example of a breaking apparatus suitable for separating the liquid crystal panel into parts;

Fig. 10 is a diagram for explaining a separating operation in the breaking apparatus shown in Fig. 9;

Fig. 11 is a perspective view of a still further example of a breaking apparatus suitable for separating the liquid crystal panel into parts; and

Fig. 12 is a perspective view of a different example of a breaking apparatus suitable for separating the liquid crystal panel into parts.

Best Mode for Carrying Out the Invention

[0012] Embodiments of the invention will be explained below with reference to the appended drawings.

[0013] Fig. 3 illustrates a producing method of liquid

crystal panels as a kind of flat display panel according to the invention. A liquid crystal panel 30 of a large size is fabricated by adhering two opposing glass plates 32, 34 with a sealant 36. Various electronic controller circuits such as a thin-film-transistor (TTF) array necessary for the display function are formed on the inner planes of the glass plates 32, 34. A part of the sealant 36 has an opening between the glass plates 32, 34 for introducing a functional material (that is, liquid crystal). Further, a terminal part 38 is formed on the glass plate 34 and it will become a terminal of the TTF array. This structure of liquid crystal panel is the same as the prior art shown in Fig. 1.

[0014] Similarly to the prior art shown in Fig. 2, a scribing line 40a is formed on a top plane of the glass plate 32 at the upper side. Further, a scribing line 40a is formed not on a bottom plane, but on the top plane of the glass plate 34. Thus, the scribing lines 40a, 40b are formed on the top planes of the two glass plates 32, 34. Further, the sealant 36 is located just below the scribing line 40a and just above the scribing line 40b, and this is also different from the prior art shown in Fig. 1.

[0015] In order to separate such a liquid crystal panel into parts, a bending force is applied to the two glass plates 32, 34 in the same direction (or upward direction in Fig. 3). Then, the two glass plates 32 and 34 can be separated at the same time in one separating step.

[0016] In Fig. 3, reference marks (a) to (d) show steps for fabricating a liquid crystal panel. At step (a), a liquid crystal panel 30 is bent at scribing lines 40a, 40b upward. Then, as shown in step (b), vertical cracks extend from scribing lines 40a, 40b through two glass plates 32, 34. Thus, as shown in step (c), the liquid crystal panel 30 is separated into two. As to scribing lines 42, 44 formed near the center or near an end on the liquid crystal panel, the relevant portions are also removed with a method mentioned above or with a prior art method. Thus, as shown in step (d), a liquid crystal panels 30' are produced.

[0017] Fig. 4 shows the terminal portion 38 of the liquid crystal panel 30' in an enlarged view. In the prior art method shown for comparison at the left-hand side in a circle of a two-dots-dash line, the starting point of breaking is positioned at the bottom plane of the lower glass plate 34. Since the breaking of the plate 34 does not necessarily progress vertically, the length L of the terminal at the terminal portion 38 is changed. On the contrary, in the liquid crystal panel of the invention, the starting point of breaking corresponds to the scribing line at the upper plane of the plate 34, the length L of the terminal 38 can be kept almost the same.

[0018] Further, in the prior art method shown at the left side, the sealant 36 extends from the edge of the glass plate towards the inside (or to the left side in Fig. 4). Then, washing water or the like remains at a void 46 near the end of the plate 32, to corrode the terminal portion 38. On the other hand, in the liquid crystal panel according to the invention, because the sealant 36 is

positioned just below the scribing position (separating position) of the upper glass plate 32, such a void does not exist, and washing water does not remain there.

[0019] In the liquid crystal display panel shown in Fig. 3, the two glass plates 32, 34 are adhered to each other after the scribing lines are formed. As shown in two examples in Fig. 5(a), the scribing lines are positioned at the same side (upper side or lower side). In another example, a scribing line is formed only on one of the two plates 32, 34. In this example, as shown with a solid line in two examples in Fig. 5(b), the scribed line is arranged inside the panel after the two plates are adhered, or it is not exposed to the outside. After the adhesion, a scribing line is formed on the other plate at the outside plane, as shown with dash line in Fig. 5(b). Even in this example, the two planes on which the scribing lines are formed are arranged at the same side (upper side or lower side).

[0020] A producing method of a liquid crystal panel is explained with a flowchart shown in Fig. 6, as an embodiment of a fabrication method of a flat display panel according to the invention. A glass plate 32 has two color filter regions on a plane thereof, and another glass plate 34 has two TFT array regions on a plane thereof. An aligning film is applied on these regions, and the aligning film is rubbed with a brush or the like in a predetermined direction. The rubbing makes liquid crystal align in the predetermined direction.

[0021] Next, a scribing line 40b is formed on the glass plate 34 with the aligning film thereon. On the other hand, after the glass plate 32 is turned upside down, another scribing line 40a is formed on the top plane. Scribing may be performed with a glass cutter wheel. Alternatively, the scribing line may be formed with a laser scribing apparatus which utilizes thermal distortion stress in a plate. Then, the two glass plates 32, 34 are washed. Next, a sealant 36 is applied to one of the glass plates on the aligning film to cover the scribing line in the vertical direction as mentioned above. Further, spacers are scattered on the aligning film of the one of the two glass plates.

[0022] Then, the two glass plates 32, 34 are adhered to each other so that the color filters oppose to the TFT arrays. Then, the liquid crystal panel is separated into two with the separating method mentioned above. Then, liquid crystal is injected through an opening formed in the sealant 36 for each of the separated parts. By sealing the opening, liquid crystal panels 30' of product size are completed.

[0023] When the two glass plates 32, 34 are adhered to each other, the scribing line 40a is positioned at the top plane of the glass plate 32. Therefore, as to the glass plate 32, the scribing line may be formed after the adhesion.

[0024] In the above-mentioned process, as shown in Fig. 3, the top planes are scribed both for the glass plate 32 at the top side and for the other glass plate 34 at the bottom side. Alternatively, the scribing may be per-

formed on the bottom planes. Further, the timing of the scribing is not limited to the step shown in Fig. 6. The scribing on one of the glass plates 32 or 34 with the aligning film thereon can be performed before adhering the glass plates 32, 34 as far as the scribing is not obstructed.

[0025] Next, a separation process appropriate for the invention is explained.

[0026] A breaking apparatus shown in Fig. 7 has a known mechanism as the prior art breaking apparatus shown in Fig. 2. A liquid crystal panel having scribing lines 40a, 40b is set on a mat placed on a table 52 so that the glass plate 34 is positioned at the upper side or the scribing lines 40a, 40b are positioned on the lower planes of the glass plates 32, 34. A breaking bar 50 is positioned above the scribing lines 40a, 40b. By pushing the breaking bar 50 downward, the liquid crystal panel 30 is bent on the mat 30 like a V-character to break the glass plates 32, 34 at the same time. The "bending like a V-character" means a state where the planes having the scribing lines (on the lower planes) are expanded while the other planes without scribing lines are compressed. Thus, a force is applied in a direction along which cracks at the scribing lines expand towards the opposing plane to separate the two glass plates 32, 34 into two.

[0027] Fig. 8 shows another breaking apparatus shown in Japanese Patent laid open Publication 4-280828/1992. Tables 52a and 52b are separated with a gap between them, and a liquid crystal panel 30 is sucked and fixed across the two tables 52a, 52b so that the scribing lines 40a, 40b are positioned in the gap. At this time, the glass plate 32 is set to be located at the upper side or the scribing lines 40a, 40b are positioned at the upper planes of the glass plates 32, 34. Then, one of the tables 52a is rotated around a center of rotation in a direction shown with an arrow. Thus, the liquid crystal panel is bent like an inverted-V-character to separate the two glass plates 32, 34 at the same time. The "bending like an inverted-V-character" means a state where the planes having the scribing lines (upper planes) are expanded while the other planes without scribing lines are compressed. In this case, a force is also applied in a direction along which cracks at the scribing lines expand towards the opposing plane so that the two glass plates 32, 34 are separated into two.

[0028] Fig. 9 shows a different breaking apparatus of the applicant on which a patent application was filed. The tables 52a and 52b are separated with a gap between them, and three supporting shafts 54, 56, 58 are fixed at the rear side of the other table 52a vertically to the table plane. The supporting shafts 56, 58 are provided along a side 60 of the table 52a facing a gap between the two tables 52a, 52b, while the supporting shaft 54 is provided at a position opposing to the supporting shaft 58 in a diagonal direction of the table.

[0029] A lower end of each supporting shaft 54, 56, 58 is connected to an end of a universal joint 62, 64, 66.

The other end of the supporting shafts 62 and 66 are fixed to the base, while that of the supporting shaft 64 is fixed via an extension mechanism 70 to the base. The extension mechanism 70 has a linear motor or the like therein to extend in the vertical direction. Similarly to Fig. 8, a liquid crystal panel 32 is sucked and fixed across the two tables 52a, 52b so that the glass plate is positioned at the upper side or the scribing lines 40a, 40b are positioned in the gap.

[0030] Fig. 10 shows a state where the extension mechanism 70 is elongated. The table 52a is rotated with a center of rotation that corresponds to a line connecting the universal joints 62 and 66. However, the direction of the center of rotation has a certain angle relative to the scribing direction. Therefore, the amplitude of the movement of the end face 60 of the table 52a becomes larger as a position on the table is moved to the front side in Fig. 10, as shown with arrows. This tendency is enhanced as the angle becomes larger.

[0031] Thus, in the glass plates, the breaking is started at the end face at the front side, and the glass plate is separated from the front side to the rear side successively. In the separation process, the separation is started at a point so that a section generated by the separation is formed smoothly with a small breaking force. Therefore, the problems mentioned above on prior art do not happen. Further, separation can be performed similarly for a glass plate for which scribing is performed with a laser scribing apparatus which uses thermal distortion stress.

[0032] Fig. 11 shows another breaking apparatus. In this apparatus, first and second product tables 13, 14 are set on a sliding table 11 and a tilt table 12 so that the edges of the tables 13, 14 make a predetermined angle. Plates G adhered to each other and having scribing lines (not shown) formed on two planes thereof are put on the tables 13, 14 and first and second clamp bars 15a, 16a press and fix the plates G. Then, the second product table 14 is rotated around a center axis of rotation 18a, so that a shear force and a tensile force are applied to the scribing lines with the clamp bars used as a pressing means. Therefore, one of the clamp bars 15a, 15b having a smaller gap acts as a breaking point for the plates G. Thus, the plates G are separated into two parts GR, GL.

[0033] Fig. 12 shows a breaking apparatus for pressing an edge of a liquid crystal panel with a pressing device 50a. A liquid crystal panel 30 according to the invention can also be separated with the apparatus. In this example, similarly to the apparatus shown in Fig. 8, the liquid crystal panel 30 is positioned on a table 52 so that one of the glass plates 32 is positioned at the upper side.

[0034] Further, it is to be noted that though the above-mentioned liquid crystal panel includes glass plates, the invention can be applied generally to a flat display panel including plates made of a brittle material or brittle materials.

[0035] Next, a producing method of a reflection type

liquid crystal projector panel is explained according to a second embodiment of the invention. The reflection type liquid crystal projector panel is fabricated by adhering a silicon plate and a glass plate opposing to each other with a sealant and by separating the adhered plates into parts. The separation step is similar to that of the first embodiment shown in Fig. 3, but is different only by replacing a glass plate at the lower side with a silicon plate. Therefore detailed explanation on the separating step is omitted here.

[0036] In the above-mentioned embodiments, a liquid crystal display panel and a reflection type liquid crystal projector panel are explained. Further, needless to say, the invention can also be applied to a transmission type liquid crystal projector panel, an organic electroluminescence element, a plasma display panel, a field emission display panel and the like.

[0037] As explained above, according to the invention two plates made of a brittle material or brittle materials are adhered so that planes on which scribing lines are formed are both the top planes or bottom planes of the two plates. Then the force applied for separating the plates exerts to extend the cracks from the scribing lines. Thus, the two plates can be separated at the same time, and the working step in the producing process can be simplified largely, while the value of the product is not decreased.

30 Claims

1. A flat display panel including two plates made of a brittle material or brittle materials and adhered to each other, wherein at least one of the two plates has a plane on which a scribing line is formed, and the plane of the at least one of the plates on which a scribing line is formed is opposed to a plane of the other of the at least one of the two plates on which no scribing line is formed.
2. The flat display panel according to claim 1, wherein each of the two plates has a plane on which a scribing line is formed.
3. The flat display panel according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the sealant is positioned just above a scribing line on the plane of the at least one of the plates on which a scribing line is formed.
4. The flat display panel according to one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the two plates are made of glass, wherein the flat display panel is a liquid crystal display panel.
5. The flat display panel according to one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the two plates are made of glass, wherein the flat display panel is a liquid crystal projector panel.

6. The flat display panel according to one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the two plates are a glass plate and a silicon plate, wherein the flat display panel is a liquid crystal projector panel.

5

7. A separation method for a flat display panel comprising the steps of:

scribing at least one of the two plates made of a brittle material or brittle materials;

10

adhering the two plates so that the plane of the at least one of the two plates on which scribing is performed opposes a plane of the other of the at least one of the two plates on which no scribing is performed;

15

scribing the other of the at least one of the two plates if scribing is not yet performed thereon; and

bending the adhered two plates like an inverted-V-character if the planes on which scribing is performed are positioned at the upper side, or like a V-character if the planes on which scribing is performed are positioned at the lower side.

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

Fig.1

PRIOR ART

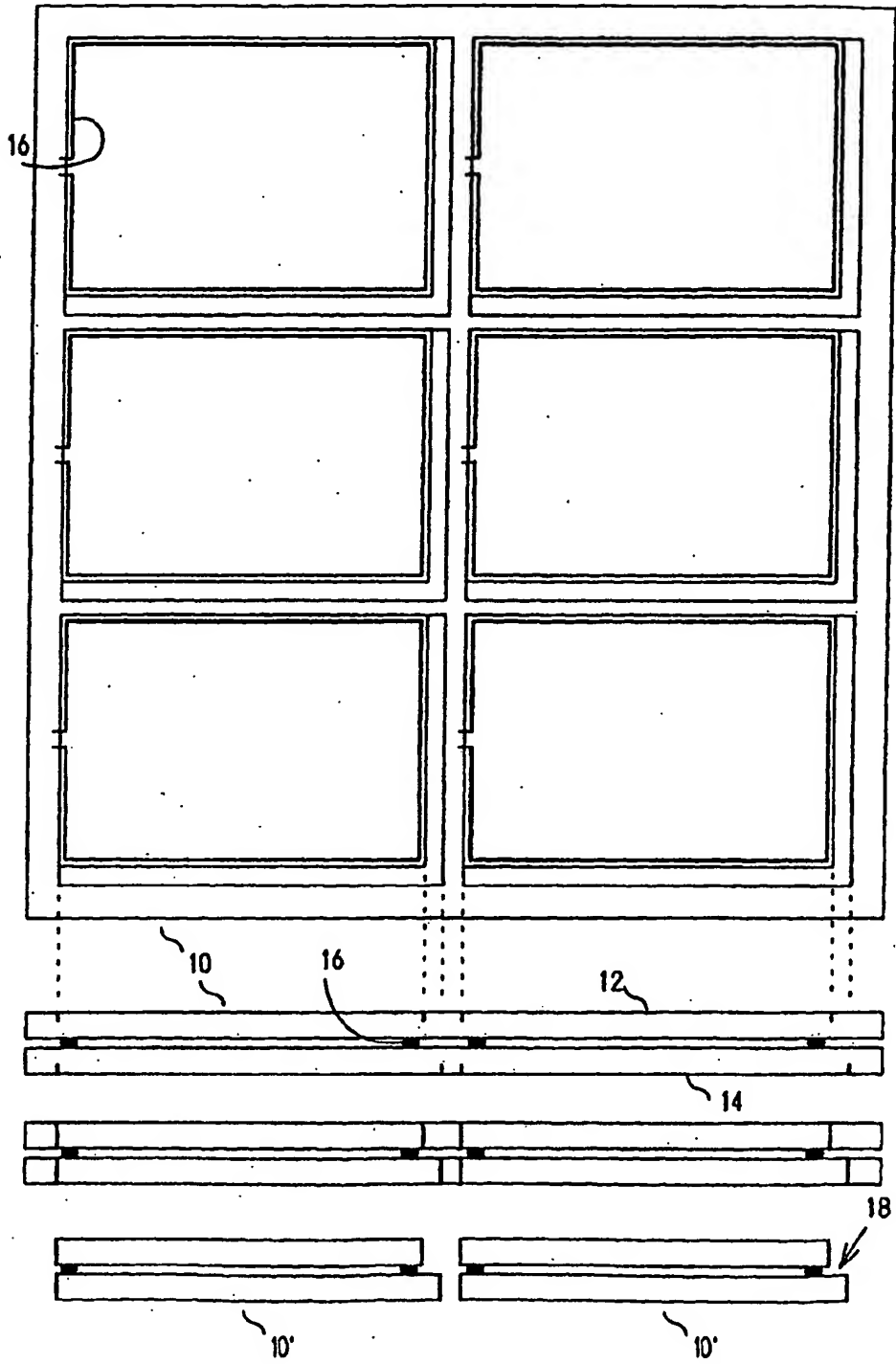


Fig.2

PRIOR ART

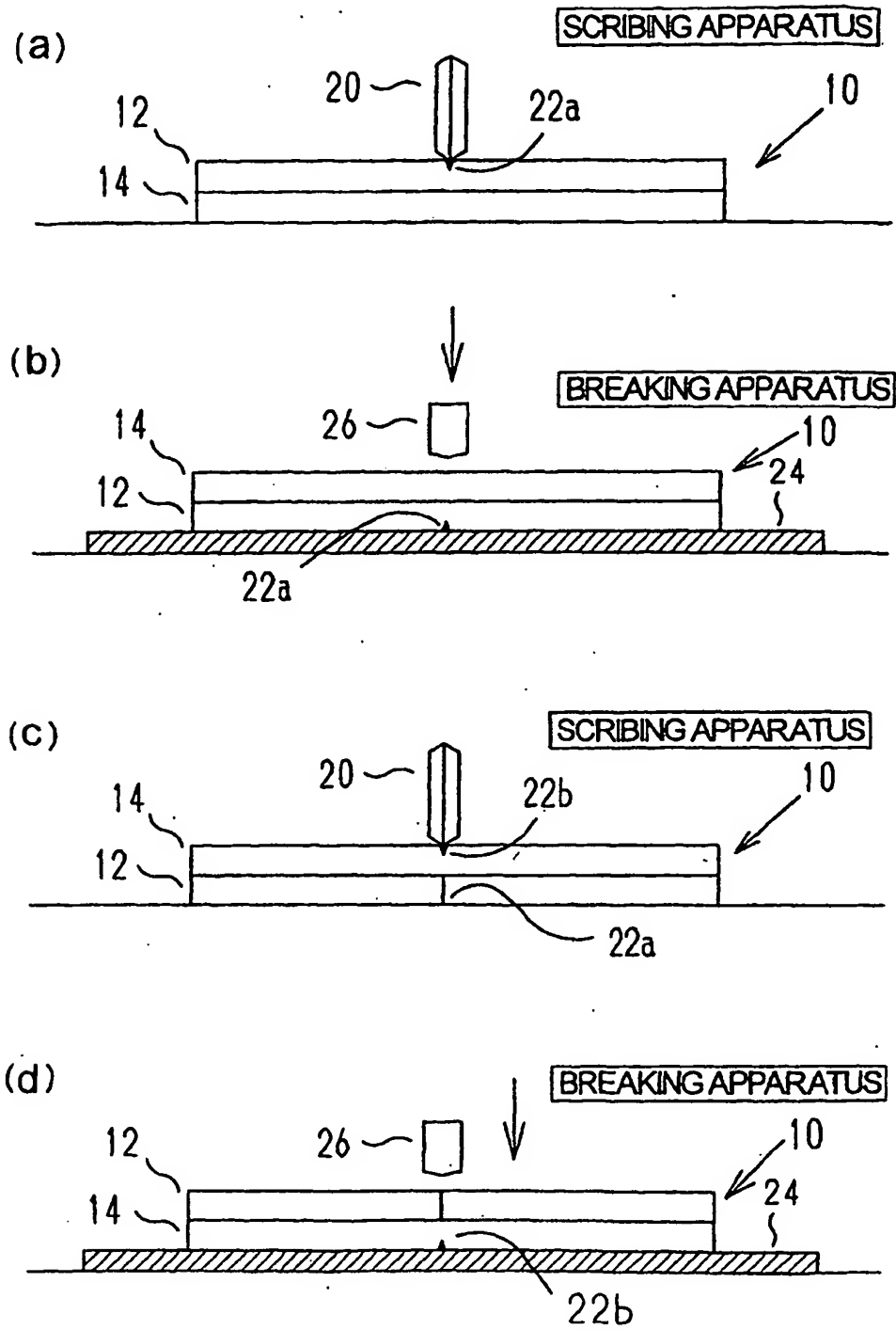


Fig.3

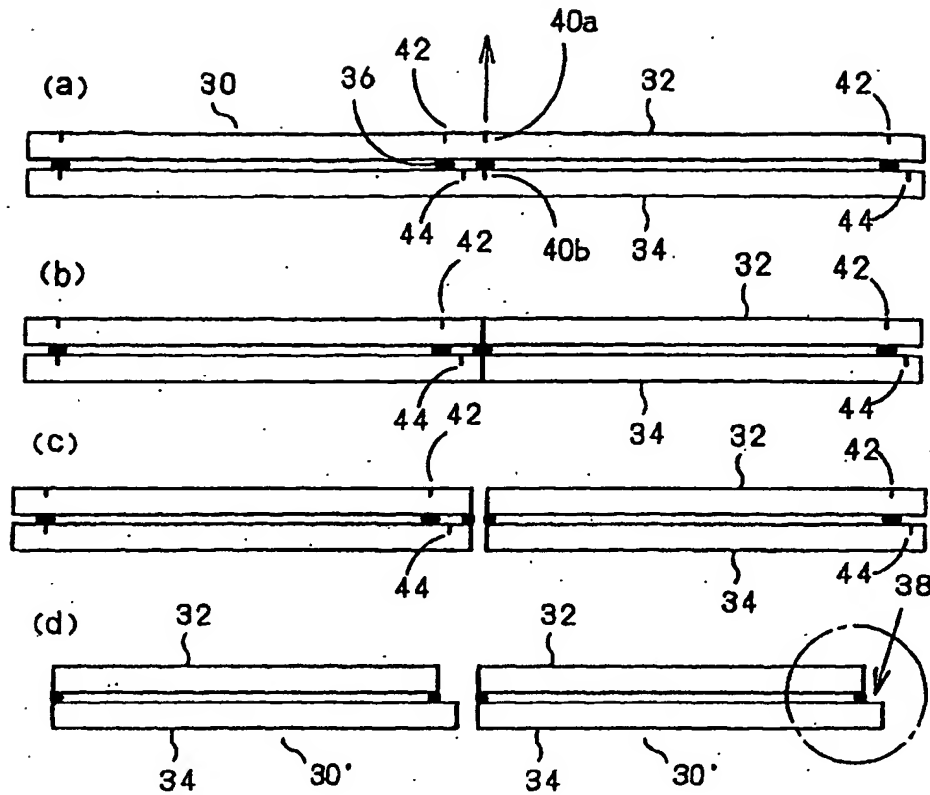


Fig.4

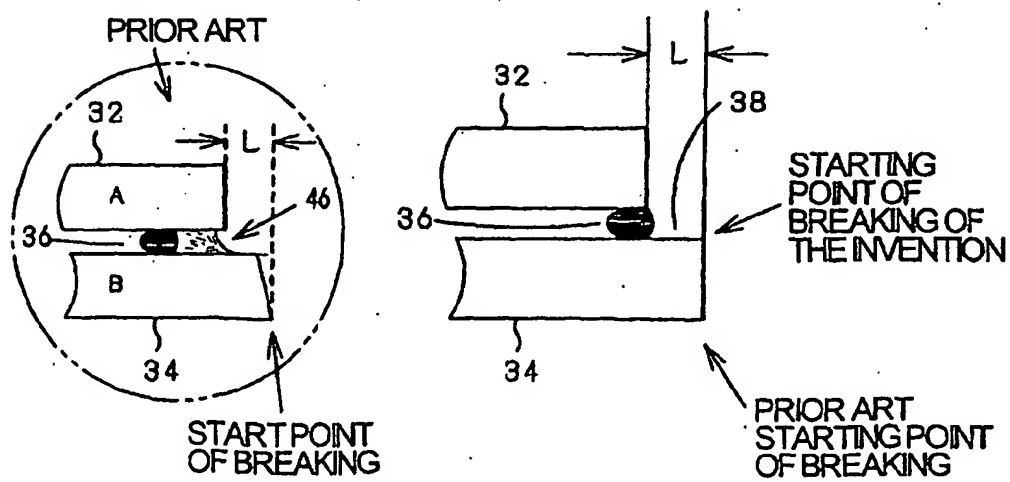


Fig.5

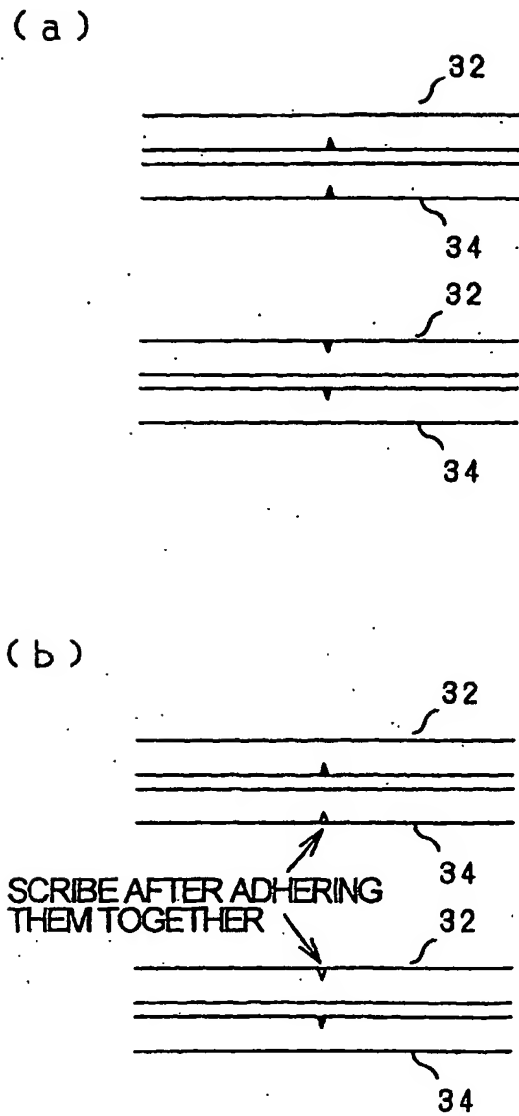


Fig.6

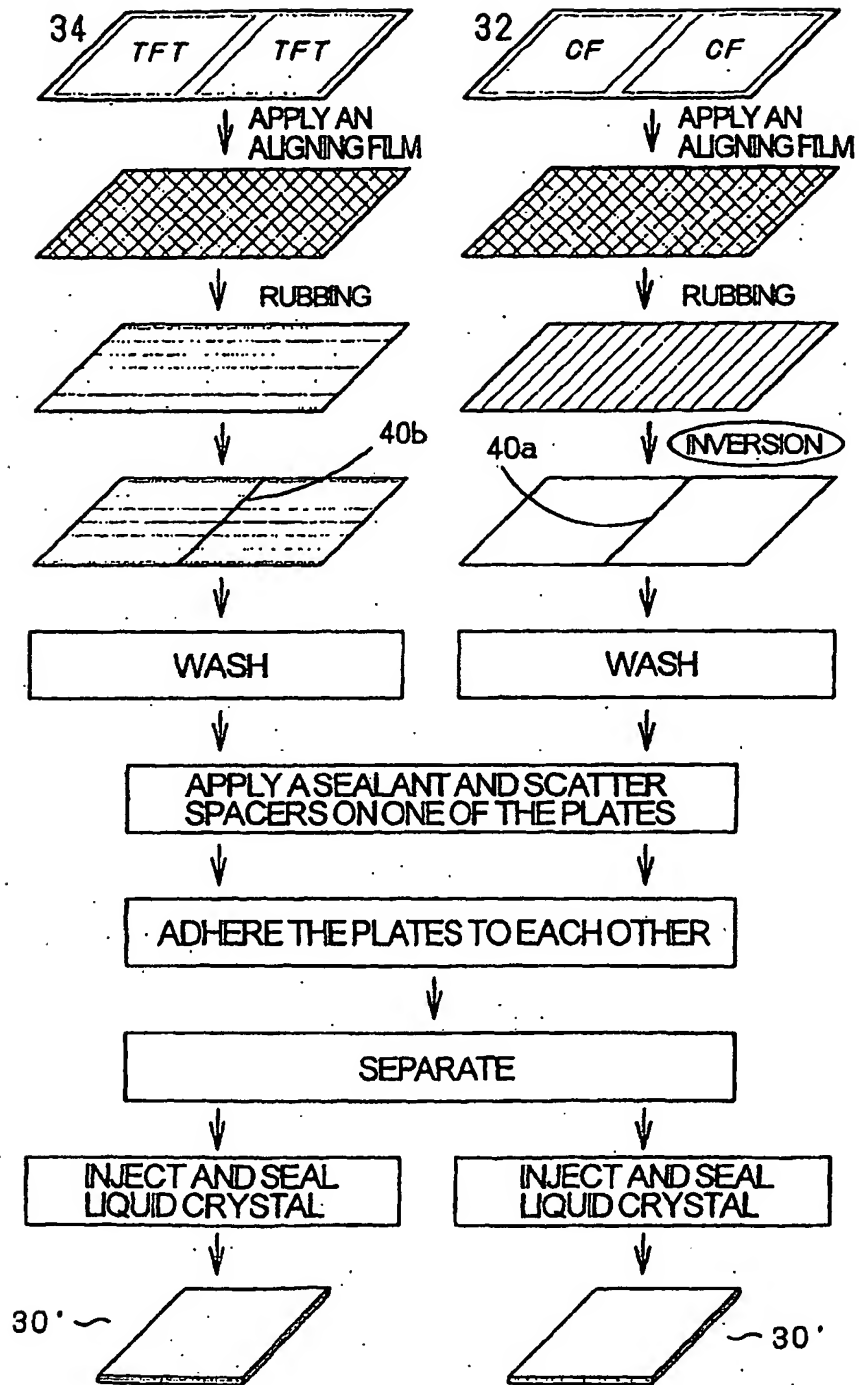


Fig.7

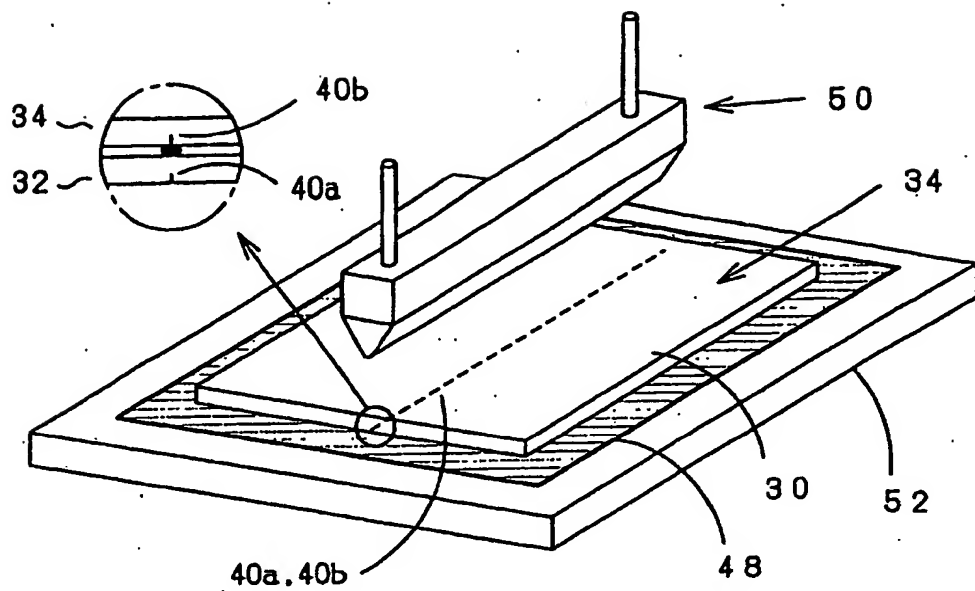


Fig.8

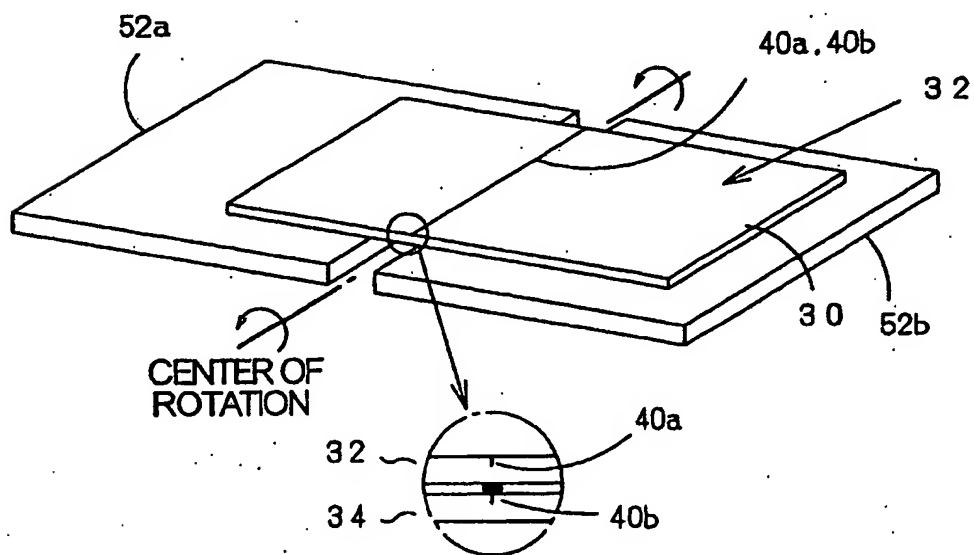


Fig.9

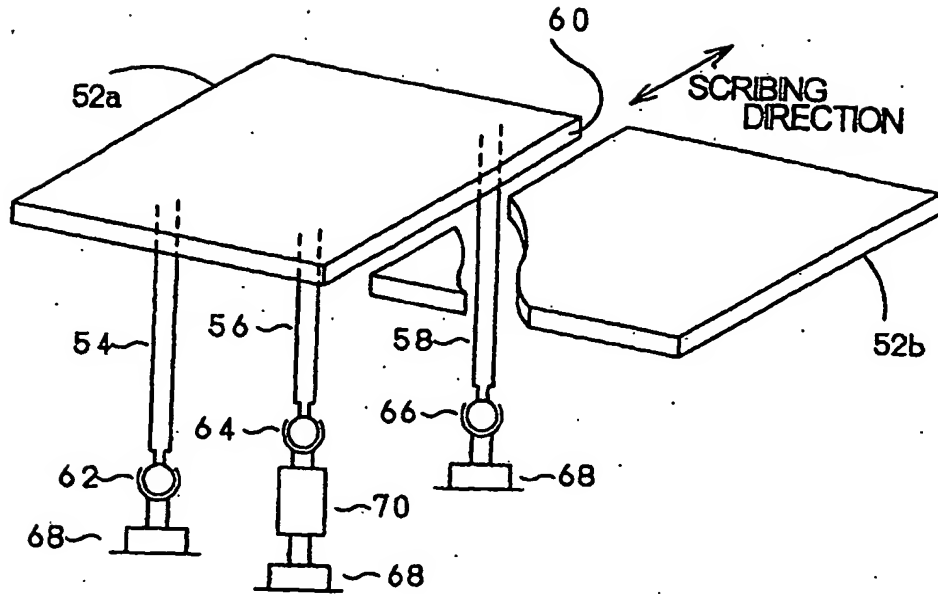


Fig.10

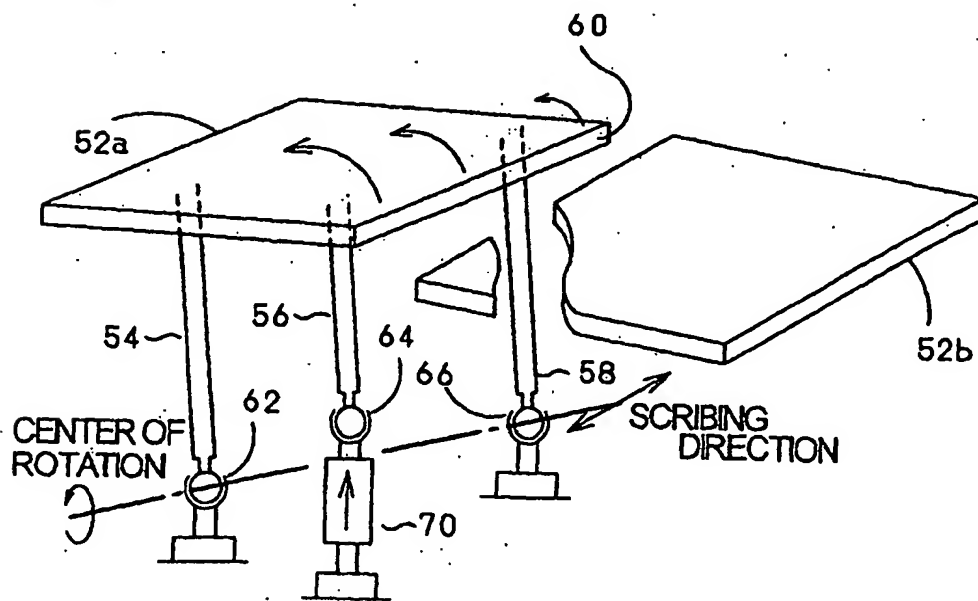


Fig. 11

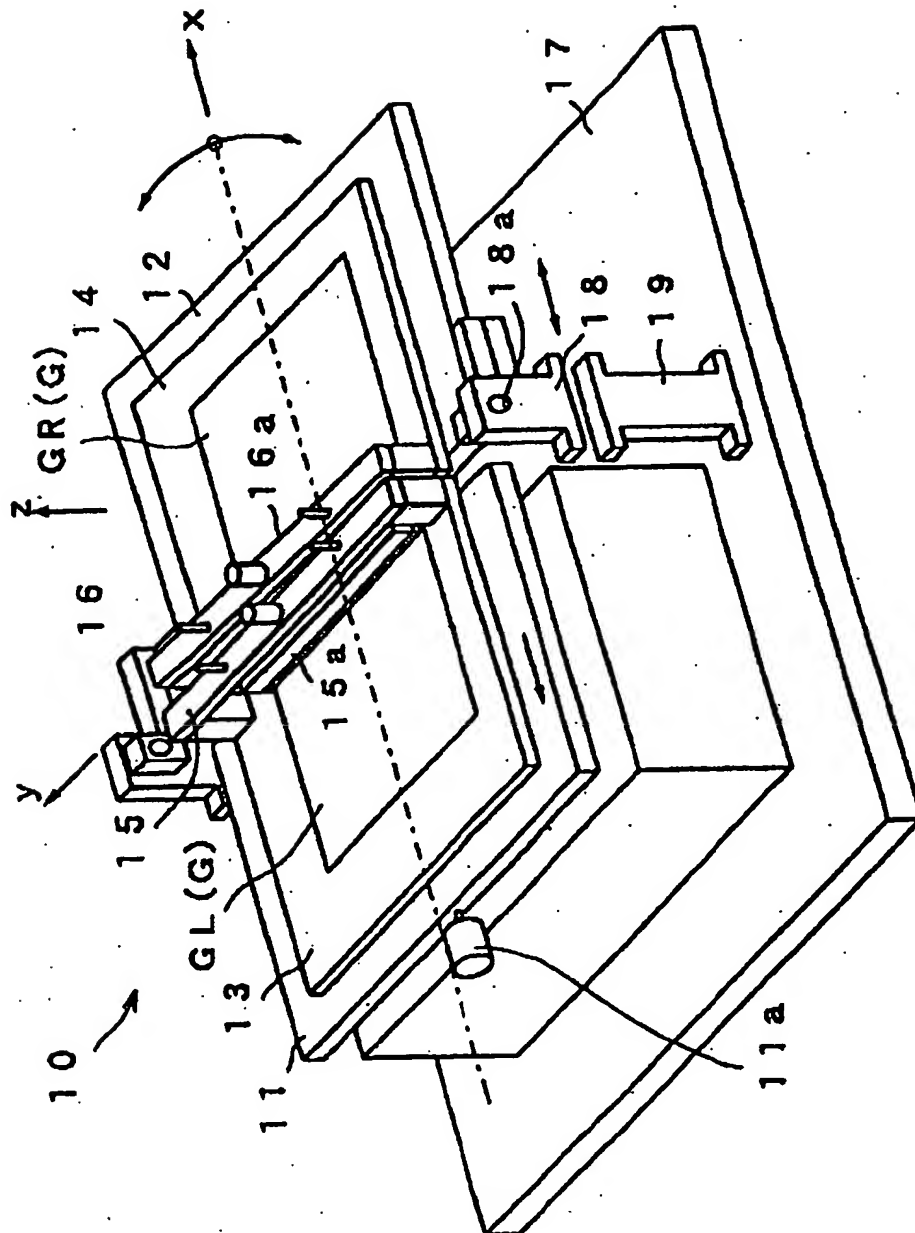
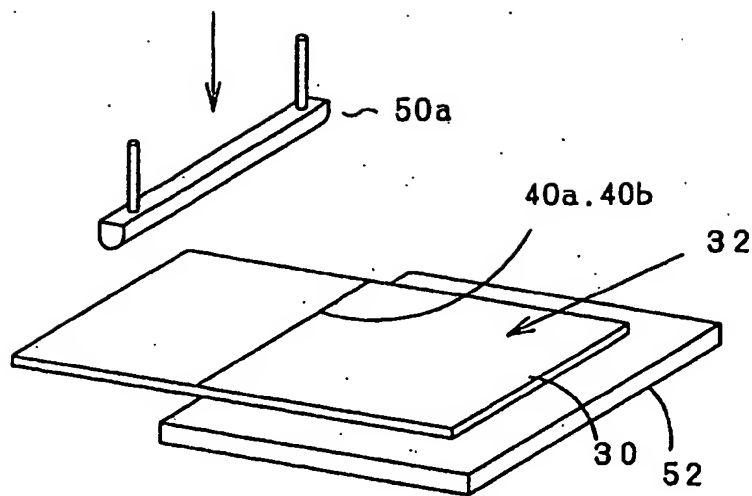


Fig.12



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/JP02/07086

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER		
Int.Cl. ⁷ C03B33/023, G02F1/1333, G02F1/13, B28D1/00		
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC		
B. FIELDS SEARCHED		
Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)		
Int.Cl. ⁷ C03B33/00-33/14, G02F1/13-1/1341		
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched		
Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1926-1996 Toroku Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1994-2002 Kokai Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1971-2002 Jitsuyo Shinan Toroku Koho 1996-2002		
Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)		
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	JP 7-218883 A (Matsushita Electronics Corp.), 18 August, 1995 (18.08.95), Par. Nos. [0020], [0026]; Fig. 4 (Family: none)	1-7
A	JP 2000-241822 A (Seiko Epson Corp.), 08 September, 2000 (08.09.00), Par. Nos. [0029] to [0032]; Fig. 2 (Family: none)	1-7
A	JP 11-84334 A (Kabushiki Kaisha Advanced Display), 26 March, 1999 (26.03.99), Par. No. [0021]; Figs. 5, 6 (Family: none)	1-7
<input type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. <input type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex.		
* Special categories of cited documents: "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art "&" document member of the same patent family		
Date of the actual completion of the international search 15 October, 2002 (15.10.02)		Date of mailing of the international search report 29 October, 2002 (29.10.02)
Name and mailing address of the ISA/ Japanese Patent Office		Authorized officer
Facsimile No.		Telephone No.

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (July 1998)